

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 363) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

MORNING BUSINESS

TRIBUTE TO PAUL COSTELLO

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, few people have advocated for their home States as tirelessly and as effectively as Paul Costello has advocated for Vermont. After 21 years at the helm of the Vermont Council for Rural Development, Paul is retiring from his post, but I know he will never retire from his steadfast support for Vermont.

Paul has dedicated his entire career to fostering dialogue and embracing civic engagement to move our communities forward by bringing people together to inspire constructive change. His decades of service deserve special recognition. As I was as well, Paul was born and raised in Vermont. He grew up in Burlington and spent his undergraduate years at the University of Vermont. He later crossed the border to earn a Ph.D. in intellectual history from Montreal's McGill University. After completing his education, Paul lectured at his alma maters and at Saint Michael's College, and he served as an adviser at Sterling College in Craftsbury. He served for 5 years at Central Vermont Basic Adult Education, bringing literacy instruction to teens and adults in rural Vermont counties, before stepping into his long-time role as executive director at the Vermont Council on Rural Development—VCRD—in 2000.

The VCRD is truly a Vermont institution. The council does important work to help strengthen our rural communities. Known for their community visits, VCRD travels to towns throughout the State, where leaders from different sectors in Vermont listen to community members identify and acknowledge the challenges and opportunities they have before them. Sticking to Paul's dedication to a locally driven process, the visiting VCRD team reflects on the community discussion and offers guidance and potential resources to help the community meet their needs and goals. The VCRD has facilitated community visits in over 75 Vermont towns, and success from these events is seen in the form of new projects, grants, job creation, implementation of green energy, and so much more. These visits also have the effect of bringing our rural communities together and adding to the sense of unity that is already so strong in our small towns.

Through Paul's leadership, the VCRD has followed through with initiatives that have a lasting positive influence on our State as a whole. The council's

Working Lands Enterprise Initiative has created hundreds of new jobs and generated more than \$35 million for Vermont's economy. Under Paul's steady hand, the VCRD has also helped to improve and expand Vermont's digital economy, something which our State continues to expand to make ours a competitive economy, locally, regionally, and internationally.

Paul has lived by his mantra of "listening, learning and helping," and the benefits can be seen across rural Vermont. He is a Vermonter through and through, and I am proud to call him a dear friend.

In honor of Paul's retirement and 21 years of exceptional service to Vermont, I ask unanimous consent that the article "Moved the Needle," by Steve Pappas, published in the Barre Montpelier Times Argus, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Barre Montpelier Times Argus,
June 3, 2021]

MOVED THE NEEDLE

(By Steve Pappas)

Paul Costello is too humble to say it, so we will: As the 21-year director of the Vermont Council on Rural Development he has probably done more for Vermont than most lawmakers or governors.

It's a bold statement, we understand. But consider that Costello has worked for a non-partisan nonprofit agency that has influenced most of the major public policy initiatives in this state during these two decades. Only our three members in the congressional delegation—and they are definitely partisan—have had that much sway for any similar length of time. Less than a week after hosting the Summit for the Future of Vermont, which brought together hundreds of Vermonters to tackle head-on some of the most difficult challenges facing our state, the announcement that Costello is stepping down stunned the state.

Costello says he will step down Sept. 30.

Through his work, Costello has led efforts through VCRD's talented staff to facilitate some of the hardest conversations out there: economy, workforce, climate change, education, community development, broadband, digital economy, social equity . . . the list goes on.

From these conversations, whether they happened in town halls or large lecture halls or virtually, Costello, in his even-keeled, thoughtful manner, has facilitated strategies aimed at setting priorities, and charting paths toward progress. Many of those decisions frame our quality of life today.

According to the news release issued by VCRD this week, "Over these years Paul has engaged communities throughout the state to help them set priorities and connect to resources, led a dozen policy council efforts to advance local opportunities, developed a score of statewide summits to build unity and common purpose to answer key rural needs, and worked in myriad ways to bring people together for the common good of their communities and for Vermont."

Being the person who coordinates, directs and often moderates those methods of communication and openness is powerful. In the same release, Costello noted, "In so many ways this is the best job in Vermont. At VCRD we have a window into communities like no other. Our role of listening, learning,

and helping to move ideas toward action in communities and in policy circles is endlessly interesting and rewarding. I want to thank all the incredible people I've been able to work with in this role, from board members to state, federal and nonprofit leaders, experts in all aspects of rural issues and especially the local leaders who do the hard work of lifting up their communities and building progress. Working with you all has been the greatest honor."

Julie Moore, chair of the VCRD board of directors noted, "Paul Costello is a Vermont treasure. Our state has benefited beyond measure from his wise counsel to everyone from governors to select board members to community leaders. We look forward to celebrating all of his accomplishments."

But here's the thing about Paul Costello: He is committed to Vermont because he loves it. To him, the work is not a paycheck. It is about making our communities stronger. It is about making our policies supportive of those communities. It is about preservation and conversation when needed, but with an eye toward answers. It is about being a part of this magnificent state.

He knows every corner of the state. He has been at the select board meetings and talked to residents about what they want, and he has been hiking and experiencing Vermont. His love for the place is real. He grew up here, in a large family, with a great appreciation that goes back decades. He hears what others want for Vermont, and he knows what he wants for Vermont. And he's so flipping nice about it all. There have to be individuals out there who don't want Paul Costello coming around and getting people thinking about how to implement change. But even those people can't point to the man and say, "I didn't like that guy." They did.

Costello listens. Even in the most serious conversation, he can find humor and a laugh. He makes every person he speaks to feel as if they are the most important person, because in that moment, they are. He is mild-mannered and kind. He goes out of his way to ask how people's days are going, even when he knows they are strapped and swamped. He treats governors and citizens with the same respect. Opinions and solutions do not require titles and doctorates and years of service. They need common ground on which to build, and that was what Costello has practiced and mentored his staff to find for more than 20 years now.

Ted Brady, who used to work with Costello and now runs the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, posted online yesterday, "I can count on one hand the number of people I have met as selfless, thoughtful and kind as Paul Costello. He's given so much to Vermont . . . and deserves a chance to play in his favorite spots in the woods and mountains of the communities he has helped to strengthen and empower. Buy him a beer if you see him."

Costello may never have to buy his own beer again. Each one of us owes him a great debt of gratitude for the Vermont he has given everyone.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I was unable to attend the rollcall vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of James Richard Kvaal, of Massachusetts, to be Under Secretary of Education. I am supportive of his nomination and would have voted in support of cloture.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control